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ABSTRACT

This information packet contains four articles supporting the notion that young children must be instructed in their native languages in order to achieve academic, social, and personal success. The document suggests that failure to develop the first language impedes progress in the second and produces a child who is limited in both. It lists financial, policy, and teacher-training impediments to development of early childhood programs in native-language. It also outlines solutions related to advocacy, legislation, interdistrict cooperation, multicultural teacher education, and parent involvement. A case study demonstrates how a migrant child's preschool experience in an English-only program created a subtractive bilingual situation, which led, in turn, to academic failure, disrupted family communication, and dropping out. An attached article by Muriel Saville-Troike discusses the influences of cultural and social factors on language development and examines those factors with regard to three categories of limited English proficient students. Those considered to be most at-risk academically were children who had lost or failed to develop their native language while not becoming proficient in English; such children had been immersed in an English-dominant environment before age 8. The NABE No-Cost Study on Families found that language-minority families whose children attended English-dominant preschool or daycare programs experienced a change or breakdown in communication patterns, loss of parental authority, and child-parent alienation. (SV)

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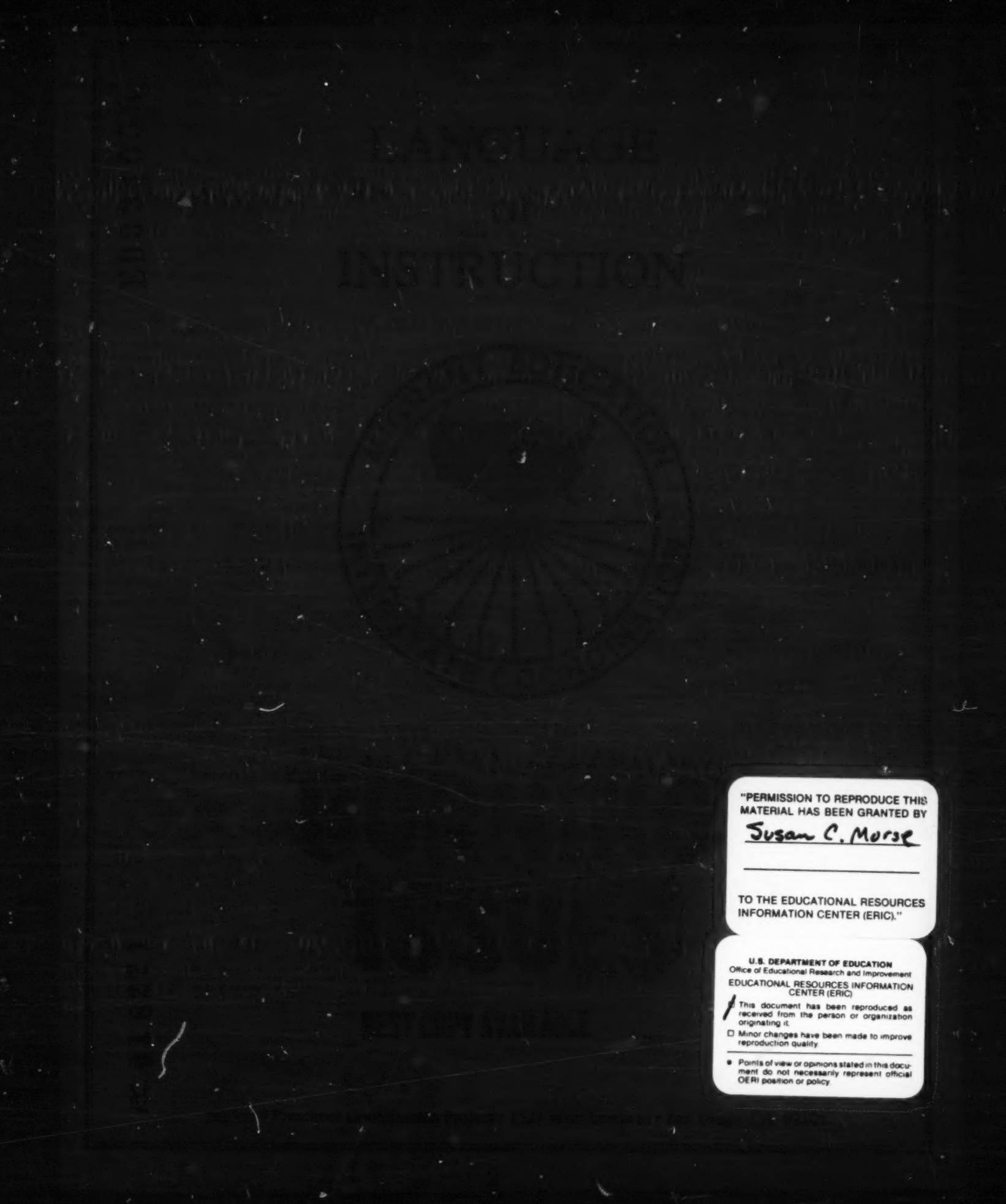

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(A Migrant Education Interstate/Intrastate Coordination Program)

LANGUAGE of INSTRUCTION
in the early years

In this information packet you will find:

Language of Instruction - ICC Report

Whatever Happened to María?

Language and Cultural Development of LEP Students in Early Childhood Years

The NABE No-Cost Study on Families

Prepared by

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1527 West Lewis Street
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• Spring 1991 •

Language of Instruction

Recent research shows that in order to experience success in his academic, social and personal life, the young child needs to be instructed in his native language. Within the early childhood education program the child should be encouraged to develop a solid communication base in the language of his family. It is within the family that most time will be spent and language will be spoken during the formative years.

Skills and pride in the home language will promote a strong sense of identity and a bond with his family that may help carry the child through other high risk situations in the future. The utilization of his primary language avoids the stifling effects on his creativity and self-esteem. The child must experience immediate and continuous success in dealing with his environment through the use of his language. The acceptance of his language which is part of his culture is of utmost significance to the development of his self esteem and consequently his success in school.

Failure to develop the first language will impede the progress of the second language and can result in a subtractive bilingual situation (a child who is limited in both languages). The strong connection between the ability to formulate ideas and the development of language suggests that limited language speakers are also not good learners. Research on the well developed bilingual child indicates that bilingual children demonstrate greater intelligence than their monolingual counterparts.

Therefore, this committee recommends that the following strategies and policies be utilized for the development of programs that develop the child's native language as a vehicle of instruction in early childhood education.

<u>Instruction in the native language</u>

- Recognize that the parents are the child's first educators, and that they and their culture must be included as a part of the school environment and the process of learning.

- Utilize the extensive research on successful strategies in the instruction of the Potentially Bilingual (PB) child.

- Instruction in effective language development techniques as well as successful techniques in English as a Second Language (ESL), such as Total Physical Response (TPR), and Whole Language.

• If the child's first language is not promoted and honored a communication breakdown may occur within the family over time.

We realize that many obstacles will impede this process (i.e.)

- lack of political and administrative support
- lack of adequate financial support
- system has not taken advantage of parent potential
- teacher preparation programs have not adequately trained teachers to meet the needs of language and culturally diverse students
- lack of bilingual teachers

Possible Solutions

- Local, state and national organizations such as Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE), National Association of Bilingual Educators (NABE), California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) and National Hispanic Council need to be advocates of change.

- Legislative representatives need to be advocates of change, also individuals need to write and call legislators.

- Districts need to coordinate/implement/institutionalize programs that meet the needs of the Potentially Bilingual (PB) child.

- Parents should be made to feel that they are partners in the education of their children.

- Training at the college and university level in multicultural education and in first and second language development must be implemented/increased.

- Bilingual staff should be hired and trained. Ongoing in-service staff development should be provided to build and maintain skills.

- Programs should seek to develop a common and cohesive philosophy about the importance of language development

in the education of young children and the appropriate roles of the home language and the second language.

Committee members: Marion Herrera, Bertha López, Concha Mora and Belia Reveles

Attached:
- Language and Cultural Development of LEP Students in Early Childhood Years from TESOL
- No Cost Study, 1/4/91 from NABE

SCM/PB (03/22/91)

Whatever Happened to María?

Maria Lara is a teenager. She was born in the U. S. of Mexican migrant parents. When she was three the family settled out into a small rural community of few hispanics. She attended a day care program in English. In elementary school the staff believed that she had aculturated well. She was pleasant cheerful and had lots of "anglo" friends. Some people didn't even know her heritage. Her grades, however, were poor. Maria speaks no Spanish. At home she speaks to her parents in English and they respond in Spanish. Recently Maria has met "prince charming," but he is a dropout, and has used drugs on occasion. Maria is indecisive and would like to talk to her mother about her own early marriage, and about María's childhood goal to be a teacher. But she can't begin to express her pent up fears, desires and emotions in a language they can both understand.

One year later Maria is a dropout, and a single mother.

Maria is in a subtractive bilingual situation. She did not develop fluency in either language before she entered school. Within the group of at risk youth, those who have a subtractive bilingual situation are "potentially the most at risk academically". [1] In addition the loss of her home language has contributed to "serious disruptions of family relations..." [2]

How did her early childhood affect María's future?

The failure of young children to develop fluency in the language that is spoken in their own home before entering school (and/or before beginning a second language) has now been shown in several studies to be at the root of social and academic failure. Socially, the effect is that the family communication system is ruptured, cultural and social ties are broken and, in effect, the child is left without the home support system.

Academically, the failure of the child to develop the first language and with it, higher level thinking skills, limits continued learning at school and at home where much of the most meaning embedded thought and language and take place.[3]

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[1] Muriel Saville-Troike, *"Language and Cultural Development of LEP Students in Early Childhood Years"* Elementary ESOL Education News, TESOL, Vol 10. No. 3. 1988.

[2] Press Brief, p.1 National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) No-Cost Study, 1/4/91.

[3] Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework, CA State Dept. of Education, Bilingual, Bicultural Education, *"The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students"* James Cummins, p.18, also Figure 8, p. 39.

Many of our early childhood education programs are verbalizing that the parent is the child's first teacher. We must truely support this concept by guarding and fostering the family unity through the development of the child's first language.

Early childhood education programs that bring learning into the home, or those that are site based, both must reinforce the language, culture and learnings that are taking place at home. From the perspective of the child, it is essential to maximize learning and strengthen identity within the family. From the perspective of the parents, it is important that the educational system validates their language and culture and their ability to parent.

Practical repercussions: We must find the resources to provide early childhood eduacation in the home language. We are better off to hire mono-lingual speakers of the home language to work with parents and preschoolers than monolingual English speakers. A strong early childhood experience in the first language will prepare the child for a far more rapid transition into English than a subtractive bilingual environment that may cause irreparable damage for years to come.

Susan C. Morse, San Diego C.O.E. for National Preschool Coordination Project, 1991

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Elementary ESOL Education News

The Official Publication of the English to Speakers of Other Languages in Elementary Education Special Interest Section

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

PART TWO/ SPRING 88 NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1988 EDITOR: CAROLINE LINSE VOL. 10 NO. 3

Language and Cultural Development of LEP Students in Early Childhood Years

by Muriel Saville-Troike

It was my pleasure to address this conference two years ago, in September 1985, on the topic of Language Development and Academic Achievement. Near the end of that presentation I noted that although my topic was the relationship of *language* development factors and academic achievement, it was quite possible that social and cultural factors might be much more powerful than purely linguistic factors in influencing educational success or failure. It was my conclusion that we must ultimately understand the interactions among personal characteristics, cultural background, societal conditions, and the educational setting if we are truly to provide all types of students with the academic skills necessary to succeed in school.

I would like to emphasize the relationship of *cultural* and *social* factors to language development and early schooling. I will consider these factors in relation to three groups of children typically categorized as 'LEP,' or Limited English Proficient; (1) those who acquire a language other than English in early childhood and learn English as a second language at school; (2) those for whom English is a native (and only) language, but who acquire a non-standard variety which differs significantly from the variety used by teachers and in written texts; and (3) those who have apparently been caught in a 'subtractive' bilingual situation, where they are exposed to both an ancestral language and English in early childhood, but seem not tohave developed fluency in either language by the time they enter school. I am intentionally using the words 'apparently' and 'seem' in defining this third category, since there is a strong view held by many sociolinguists that such children do not exist, and that their definition as having limited proficiency in two languages is merely an artifact of inappropriate language assessment procedures. There is some evidence to support this argument, to be sure, but I think our experience in schools tells us such a category of LEP students may indeed be a valid one. It is this third category of LEP children, in fact, who are potentially most at risk academically.

For the children in the first category who acquire a language other than English in early childhood, that language is part of the native culture being acquired in the process of children's enculturation to their primary reference group in the home and community. Children in this category are most likely to be fairly recent immigrants to the United States. For a number of reasons, they prove to be least at risk academically in this setting, in spite of the fact that they may know no English at all on school entry. The native language of these children is a primary medium for the transmission of other aspects of their native culture from one generation to the next, such as values, beliefs, and rules for social behavior. If the children remain in contact with their native culture, their native language proficiency will expand to include expression of the new concepts they develop, the new domains in which they function, and the new role relationships in which they participate. This intrinsic relationship of language to culture is so 'natural' as to operate at an unconscious level for most native speakers, furthered by informal means more than by formal education, and by family and peers more than by professional educators. By the time children begin their formal elementary education at the age of five or six, they have already internalized many of the basic values and beliefs of their native culture, learned the rules of behavior which are considered appropriate for their role in the community, and established the procedures for continued socialization; they have learned how to learn.

When English is learned as a second language by these children in regions where it is the language of the dominant culture, it must ultimately be able to serve many of the same functions as English does for the native speaker, including medium of instruction, and participation in expanding social domains and role-relationships. Thus, second-language speakers must be able to function at least part of the time according to the rules of the English-dominant American culture.

While the native participant of a culture acquires these rules quite naturally and unconsciously in the process of first culture learning, or enculturation, the process for children acquiring a second culture is *acculturation*, the addition of a second set of rules for behavior which may coexist beside the first, replace them, or modify them. One possible result, which has particularly negative psychological and educational consequences, is the rejection of both, or *anomie*.

For children in the second category who acquire only English, but a non-standard variety of the language, language and cultural development are in essentially the same relationship as for children in the first category I discussed. English is part of the native culture being acquired in early childhood; linguistic forms (such as words and sentences) are first ascribed meaning only because they are embedded in contexts of interaction, which include not merely what can be

immediately perceived by a child's senses, but also include his or her interpretation of the sequence of acts that are taking place, the relationship of participants, the emotional tone, and other salient aspects of the setting. So unfolds the process not only of linguistic, but of social and cultural development.

It is important to emphasize here that the meaning of language forms and the norms for their interpretation arise from social and cultural experiences in home and community, because there is no reason to expect that children who speak the same language will necessarily have the same culture. Just as we cannot assume that a child acquiring Spanish in a barrio in San Antonio, Texas is learning the culture of Spain, nor even the dominant culture of nearby Spanish-speaking Mexico, so we cannot assume that a child acquiring English in a village here in Alaska is learning the culture of the dominant English-speaking society and its schoools. While similar linguistic forms may develop in very different settings, cultural differences entail differences in the ways those forms are used, and the differences in the meanings which are based in experience.

Because children in this second category speak English, it is difficult for those of us in ESL and Bilingual Education to explain why they generally do less well academically in U.S. schools than do children in the first category who may enroll with no English at all. After all, ESL and Bilingual Education in the United States were founded — and funded — largely on the premise that linguistic differences as such, and particularly a lack of proficiency in English, are a primary causative factor in the low academic achievement of students in American schools who are from linguistic minority backgrounds. For this second group of children, the label 'LEP' does not apply to overall English language proficiency, since systematic observation and other modes of research have proved most of the children studied to be highly proficient in interpreting and using the variety of English spoken in their homes and communities. The 'limited' designation here reflects differences between the variety of English which they have acquired and that which is expected and required by schools. While these linguistic differences are very real, they are surely vastly less 'different' than those encountered by speakers of a foreign or a Native American language.

So why do these English-speaking children, overall, do less well in school? The data underlying this question come in part from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reports for the states of Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, which show Hispanic students regularly outperform both Black and American Indian students (who, for the most part, are monolingual English speakers). Further, surveys conducted by state departments of education in New York, Texas, and Illinois document a similar stratification, with speakers of non-standard English — not of other languages — on the bottom of the heap.

I believe this stratification proves that our premise that the low academic achievement of linguistic minority students is primarily caused by lack of proficiency in English, is an overly simplistic one. While most Native American languages in the United States have been erradicated and children have been raised in monolingual English households and communities, this has done nothing for the children's school achievement. As I said at the beginning of this presentation, there is good reason to suspect that children's competence in English at the time they enroll in school does not correlate as highly with their ultimate academic success as do some other factors, and that a different language of instruction is only *one* dimension of the cultural discontinuity between home and school which has traditionally raised a barrier to learning for the students who concern us here. I will return to address some programmatic and instructional issues which I believe are also involved, and which may in fact also be significant barriers.

Stong arguments have been made that the linguistic divergencies from standard English represented by children in these first two categories — speaking a different language or speaking a non-standard variety of English — are in fact differences, but not deficits in language development. I heartedly endorse that point of view. For the third category of children, however (those who are 'bilingual', but have apparently not developed fluency in their first or second language), we cannot so readily reject a possible deficit condition, and to do so on theoretical or philosophical grounds might deprive such children of needed remediation.

Let me first mention some data which give some indication of the nature and possible extent of such a category, as cited by Lily Wong Fillmore (1985). She reports that several studies that have shown the development of language proficiency in LEP students have shown that from a quarter to over a half of students who are identified as LEP

> ... are no more proficient in their first languages than they are in English. In fact, this research indicates that English rather than the first language is the predominant language form of many of these LEP students, suggesting that reliance on the first language is not responsible for the poorly developed English skills. That many limited English-speaking students appear to be English-dominant is especially troubling.

Fillmore further reports that

> In Houston, Texas, to give a specific example, over a third of the district's 34,000 LEP students have been found to be predominantly English-speaking. Their linguistic deficiencies are clearly reflected in academic performance: these students reportedly score well below the 23rd percentile level in achievement tests that depend on a knowledge of English.

I want to spend more time discussing this third LEP category because understanding the circumstances under which such a deficit develops is an important requisite to prescribing remediation of any kind, or better yet, to preventing the condition from arising in the first place. In some case, when young children have begun language acquistion in another language and then been immersed in an English-dominant environment, they lose or fail to develop their native language skills while still not developing adequate proficiency in English. In recent years, I have been conducting research on children in Illinois who have come from other countries and entered the English-dominant setting at ages ranging from 3 to 12. Language dominance tests administered to 311 children twice each year have shown that children who first encounter English between ages 3 and 5 shift in dominance quite rapidly and become English dominant within two years — even when parents continue speaking only the native language at home. Almost all of these children are still classifiable as LEP speakers when they reached first grade, however. Children who first encounter English at age 6 or 7 shift at a slower rate, and children who do not encounter English until age 8 or beyond shift more slowly at first and then appear to level off after the second year. Only these older children seem to be successful in

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maintaining a balance between their two languages. Age of entry in an English-dominant setting is thus a major factor in determining whether the experience will be one of additive or subtractive bilingualism.

To be sure, there are many studies which show young children are quite capable of developing two languages simultaneously without detriment to either, but all those I know of have been conducted in settings where both languages (and indeed, bilingualism) were valued by family and community, or where the dominant language of the environment was not as highly valued as the language of the home. In settings where English is dominant and other languages not highly valued, young children are much more likely to lose or fail to fully develop native language skills.

The second part of this article will appear in the Spring 1988 issue of the Newsletter

Building Bridges

Barbara Murphy

A look at research, methods, and materials reported in other journals.

Australian Journal of Reading is a quarterly journal of the Australian Reading Association. Subscription or ordering information can be obtained from the Australian Reading Association, P.O. Box 76, Carlton Victoria 3053 Australia.

Australian Journal of Reading, vol. 9 no. 2 June 1986.

What shall we teach children to help them comprehend? by David Whitehead. pp 59-70.

Reading involves interaction of prior knowledge in four areas: 1) knowledge about the language of texts, 2) real world knowledge, 3) specific knowledge about context 4) procedural knowledge or strategies for comprehending texts. Whitehead outlines five comprehending strategies: 1. imaging (visualizing), 2. paraphrasing, 3. questioning strategies (as how to inference), 4. pre-reading strategies (as what questions can I ask about the topic, character? etc.) 5. metacognitive strategies (such as why am I reading this text). Whitehead gives many examples in each of the procedural steps listed here and refers to significant research in each.

Australian Journal of Reading, vol. 9 no. 3 August 1986

This issue is devoted to the second language student and various aspects of reading. Choosing which article to cite here was difficult. I chose the one dealing with process writing because research in this area is not as extensive as in other facets of reading and writing.

Process writing and non-English speaking background children by Brian Cambourne. pp 126-139

How do young children who are just learning English approach writing in that language when they have no literacy skills in their native language? Cambourne and colleagues studied kindergarten classrooms from day 1. They found that ESL youngsters followed the same procedures in process writing as do native speakers of English, only they do so at a slower pace. They spent longer periods of time in strategies such as using environmental print resources before they came to using 'invented spelling' strategies. Cambourne speculates that this is so, of course, because the youngsters do not have a solid base in their second language and so have less to draw on. Nonetheless, the progression through the various patterns indicates a universality in the language learning process.

Australian Journal of Reading vol. 9 no. 4 November 1986

Young readers and their cultural connections by Marie Clay pp 239-251

Clay argues that if children learn by making sense of new experiences through connecting them to previous ones then formal education should contain strategies for helping youngsters to make the connection—especially when the youngsters must make connections from experiences in a culture different from that of the school, from their culture to the culture of others. Dialogue, Clay suggests, is one way to do this. Conversation between students and teacher can take place throughout the curriculum and especially in the sharing of books. But Clay cautions that teachers must constantly examine their own assumptions and recognize the value of their own cultural background, lest they mistake their viewpoint as universal. In the course of her argument, Clay reminds us that meaning comes in chunks and when chunks are broken up into manageable tiny units, as they so often are in reading lessons, meaning is lost. The less we break information up into small units, the more we preserve meaning and the more we enable children to make connections

Australian Journal of Reading vol. 10 no. 1 March 1987

Children's conceptions of the purpose of pictures in a story book by David Symington pp 9-17

In Symington's study, first graders from a variety of cultural backgrounds were asked what they thought the pictures in a particular book were there for. In general, the children's responses indicate that dialogue between teacher and students would aid the students in using them to gain meaning from the text and gain more from the reading of story books.

Australian Journal of Reading vol. 10 no. 2 June 1987

Improving interactions in reception class by Judy Casburn pp 75-84

Casburn describes how she observed the interactions of children in two groups and initiated changes in each group's composition in order to have youngsters with strong academic skills and positive attitudes interact with youngsters who didn't. Casburn let the kids in on what she was doing. Before she made the changes she role-played negative and positive behaviors and asked the students to comment on each. For the most part, her strategies were successful.

Australian Journal of Reading vol. 10 no. 3 August 1987

Using microcomputers to support early literacy learning, by Marilyn Fler pp 177-182

Fler contends that microcomputers fit well into a developmental, holistic approach to literacy. Her remarks on software are brief; it should be chosen with an eye to interactive qualities and the relevance of the content to the audience. Most of the article is concerned with the use of the word processor and its use in the writing process. Editing and publishing are made easier and more can be published. She cites findings from a study in Western Australia in which students who evidenced low ability produced work of an improved quality, more small group conferencing took place and low achievers and poor handwriters were highly motivated when the word processor was used.

PRESS BRIEF

The NABE No-Cost Study on Families

In a nationwide survey of families, volunteer researchers have found evidence of serious disruptions of family relations occurring when young children learn English in school and lose the use of the home language. This finding supports other research that documents the benefits of native language preschool programs. The study revealed that while language minority parents recognize the importance of English and want their children to learn it at school, they do not want it to be at the expense of the home language. Many of the parents expressed a concern that their children will lose their language and become estranged from their families and cultural heritage. Others reported that their children had already lost or were losing the language.

The study was conducted over the past year by volunteers representing a broad spectrum of individuals—teachers and teacher aides, parents, community workers, school administrators, university students, children's advocates, social workers and university researchers. They interviewed over a thousand language minority families across the country to determine the extent to which families have been affected by children's participation in preschool programs conducted partly or entirely in English. Hundreds of volunteers visited homes to ask about changes in family communication patterns as the children learn English in school.

The study is a reaction by children's and family advocates to current efforts to get non-English speakers as young as three and four years of age into preschool programs where they can be taught English before kindergarten. Language learning theorists contend that such preschool programs are linguistically and culturally unsound, and may have negative consequences on the language, social and intellectual development of children.

Last year at a plenary session of the National Association for Bilingual Education's annual conference in Tucson, language learning experts, Alice Paul of the University of Arizona, Jim Cummins of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Guadalupe Valdés and Lily Wong Fillmore of the University of California at Berkeley, called on the organization's membership to join them in conducting the study, warning that English-only programs during the preschool years can result in serious disruptions of basic developmental processes in children and contribute as well to breakdowns in parent and child relations. The children of non-English speaking parents are in the greatest danger, according to Wong Fillmore. When such children are introduced to English before they are developmentally ready to deal with the assimilative forces associated with its use in school, they often lose the home language, and with it, the ability to communicate easily with parents and other family members.

Over the summer, the volunteer researchers interviewed an ethnically diverse sample of families, including Asian, Southeast Asian, Latino, American Indian, Haitian, Arabic, African and European Americans. Children in these

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families had learned or were learning English in school. The interviewers asked parents whether language use in the home had changed since their children entered school, and they asked them to judge their children's present ability to speak and understand the family language. Families whose children attend programs conducted partly or entirely in English were compared with over three hundred families whose children attend preschool and day care programs that are conducted exclusively in the language of the home.

At a recent meeting held at the University of California at Berkeley some thirty researchers, educators and children's advocates from across the country examined the data that had been gathered to assess the consequences of language choice in preschool programs. Their preliminary examination suggested striking differences between the two samples involved in the study. There was evidence of substantial erosion of native language ability among children who had been exposed to English in preschool, and indications that parents and children in these families were having difficulty communicating with one another as the children switched to English. In contrast, the families whose children attend programs that are conducted in the language of the home reported significantly less disturbance of communication patterns. One family whose older children had attended English-only programs expressed her concerns for her younger children. The mother, who speaks no English said: "My (older) children began school at age five and have lost Spanish almost completely. It is very difficult for us to commmunicate with them." She has placed her younger children in a preschool program that is conducted entirely in Spanish in the hope that they will grow up bilingual rather than as English monolinguals.

An interviewer told the story of a Korean immigrant family in which the children had all but lost the ability to speak their native language after just a few years in American schools. The parents could speak English only with difficulty, and the grandmother who lived with the family could neither speak or understand it. She felt isolated and unappreciated by her grandchildren. The adults spoke to the children exclusively in Korean. They refused to believe that the children could not understand them. They interpreted the children's unresponsiveness as disrespect and rejection. It was only when the interviewer, a bilingual Korean-English speaker, tried to question the children in both languages that the parents finally realized that the children were no longer able to speak or understand Korean. The father wept as he spoke of not being able to talk to his children. One of the children commented that she did not understand why her parents always seemed to be angry.

A mother, in response to the interviewer's questions about changes in the communication patterns in the home, said this: "My two boys speak only English when talking to each other and they have already stopped using Spanish. I can't understand, of course, what they are talking about. And sometimes when I speak to them in Spanish, I have to re-explain or redefine vocabulary." This mother speaks only Spanish. Another mother reported that while she understands and can speak some English, her husband does not. The children have lost the use of the parental language so the father can no longer communicate with them. He is depressed and upset that he has "lost his children."

It may take years before the harm done to families can be fully assessed, the researchers believe. One family which has has been in the United States for nearly twenty years reveals the extent to which breakdowns in family communication can lead to the alienation of children from their parents. The four children, who are now teen-agers, have completely lost their ability to speak or understand Spanish. The children are ashamed of Spanish, it was reported. They do not acknowledge it when their parents speak it even though it is the only language the parents know. The mother says her seventeen year old son is having problems in school. He is often truant and is in danger of dropping out. She has tried to influence him but can't because he doesn't understand her. A recent attempt at discussion ended in physical violence, with mother and son coming to blows when words failed them.

The stories of families in which language and cultural shifts have resulted in the breakdown of parental authority and of the children's respect for their parents are often tragic. For the Southeast Asian refugee families especially, the breakdown of the family can mean a loss of everything. Many of them left behind all of their possessions when they fled their native lands. They came to the U. S. with the hope of keeping their families intact. They do not understand what is happening to them as they see their families falling apart. They do not see how the language their children are learning in school figures in this process. They want their children to learn English. They know how critical it is to their economic survival in this country. They believe that they can maintain Hmong or Khmer or Lao or Vietnamese without help since these languages are spoken in the home. They ask, "how can children lose their language?" But they do. And by the time the parents realize what is happening, it is too late to do anything about it.

A researcher at the Berkeley meeting told about a Cambodian father who has learned what it means for children to lose their native language and for a parent to lose his children to the assimilative forces in this country. The family had fled Cambodia a few years ago to escape persecution and the threat of death by starvation and violence. After a few years in a southern California urban area, the father is ready to return to Cambodia despite the danger he faces there. He has lost control of his older children. He can't communicate with them any longer, and they are involved in dangerous activities as members of a street gang. The father feels that the dangers the family faces in Cambodia are not as great as the ones they have already encountered in the U. S. He wants to protect his younger children from the harm that has been done to the older ones, no matter what it may cost him.

A full report of the findings of the No-Cost Study will be available in several months, according to Wong Fillmore. Inquiries about this work should be directed to NABE No-Cost Study, care of Lily Wong Fillmore at the Graduate School of Education, University of California at Berkeley.